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Le Corporazioni d'Arti e Mestieri e la liberta del commercio interno negli antichi economisti Italiani. Studio del Dott. GUISEPPE ALBERTI. Milano, Hoepli, 1888. — 8vo, 458 pp.

In this elaborate treatise we have the work of a young pupil of Professor Cossa, who has evidently been inspired by the cyclopædic accomplishments of his preceptor. It is an attempt to give a comprehensive review of the opinions of all the Italian economists down to the end of the last century on the question of restriction or freedom of internal trade and industry. Doctor Alberti has not only patiently waded through the fifty volumes of Custodi's collection of the *Economisti Italiani*, but has collected all the economic writers in Piedmont, Lombardy, Venice, Tuscany, the Papal States, Naples and Sicily, and has given us excerpts from and explanation of their views on the guild and restrictive system. He has also made plentiful extracts from the English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish writers, but has taken these mostly at second hand from the general histories. The consequence is that we have a hodge-podge of good and bad ; for where so many writers are mentioned the majority are sure to be of little importance. The author practically admits that all the Italian reformers followed the lead of de la Court, Cliquot de Blervâche, Turgot and Adam Smith, — and his work will be interesting only to those who desire to pursue more minutely the progress of economic thought in the restless states that made Italy a "geographical expression." Dr. Alberti finds that the development of theory away from the system of mediæval restriction was due to four causes. These were the current of free trade, by which is meant the freedom of exportation ; the current of mercantilism, which desired national expansion, and broke down internal barriers while setting up external restrictions ; the current of agrarian protection, which desired free internal trade in corn ; and finally the physiocratic current, which desired freedom in all commodities, in commerce as well as industry. This is all true so far as it goes, and Dr. Alberti does well to emphasize the point (so frequently overlooked by English writers) that mercantilism was in reality a movement of progress from mediæval restriction to modern liberty. But Dr. Alberti does not by any means exhaust the catalogue of influences that brought about modern freedom of trade and industry. He does not dig deep enough, and we must not expect to find in his book a true philosophy of the free industry argument.

Like so many continental works, the book is woefully in need of an index.

E. R. A. S.